

# Watch and grab thefts: Right out of your own backyard



## Please route to:

- Dealer principal
- General manager
- F&I manager
- Sales manager
- Service manager
- Office manager

## How it happens

It's really cold outside and the salesman is waiting inside while his demo is warming up outside. Someone walks up and drives off with the demo before the salesperson can move or say a word. In another recent incident, a carload of individuals followed a transport into a dealership storage lot and watched while the new vehicles were unloaded. As soon as the driver was finished unloading, several individuals jumped out of the car, grabbed keys from the door locks and drove off with two vehicles.

## Easy money

The fact is that thieves have found out that it is easier and safer to steal a car from you than it is to rob a bank. The money's just as good and the FBI doesn't get involved. In some areas of the country, it is difficult to get any response from local law enforcement agencies when reporting a car theft. Today manufacturers are making vehicles harder to steal, and more people are installing anti-theft systems. This leaves thieves with few options – the best one being to find a vehicle with the keys in it.

## The best place to find one

Car dealerships have lots of cars and trucks, and everyone knows it. Cars parked here and there, keys laying around on desks, test drives, customer drop-offs, etc. It doesn't take long for an experienced thief to case a dealership and identify weaknesses. If you have a loose key control policy, customer cars with keys left in them, or no lot security – they'll soon know it. There is no doubt that thieves will take the path of least resistance. If your dealership is the easiest one to steal from, they'll steal from you. The goal is to make it as difficult as possible to steal yours, so thieves will move on to the next dealership.

## Preventative measures

The following measures will help prevent you from being chosen as a target:

- **Attentive and courteous sales staff.** Probably the best way to move thieves down the road is to have your staff approach every person that comes on the lot and ask them if they can be of assistance. Instruct all employees to question any unknown person “wandering” the lot.
- **Employees only.** Some areas of the dealership should be designated for “employees only”. Designated vehicle delivery areas, the service department and inventory storage areas should be included. Visitors in these areas should be escorted by an employee at all times.
- **Never leave keys in unattended vehicles.** Employees should never exit a vehicle without keys in hand. This includes sales staff, service employees, porters and makeready employees.
- **Protect keys.** Inventory and customer keys should be kept under lock and key. Leaving keys laying out on desks is an open invitation to steal. Open key boards, especially those left out on the lot or near doorways, are also an easy target.

Remember that the main idea is to separate the keys from the vehicle. Many thefts will be avoided by following that simple rule. Contact your local Zurich account executive for more ideas on protecting your investment.



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